

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 754

Commemorating the lives and legacies of Allie Thompson, William Grayson, and William Thompson.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 4, 2019

Agreed to by the Senate, February 23, 2019

WHEREAS, the year 2018 marked the 100th anniversary of the lynching of Allie Thompson, who was one of several African American men lynched in Culpeper County, including William Grayson and William Thompson; and

WHEREAS, millions of Africans and their descendants were captured in their homelands and forced into enslavement in the 13 colonies and in the United States, including in the Commonwealth of Virginia, between 1619 and 1865; and

WHEREAS, in the defining moment of the founding of the nation, the Declaration of Independence proclaimed that "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."; and

WHEREAS, slavery ranks as one of the most horrendous of all atrocities against persons of African descent in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Black Codes, Jim Crow laws, sharecropping, the separate but equal doctrine, and the nationally and locally sanctioned vigilante crimes of lynching succeeded slavery as the ultimate expression of racism and intimidation of persons of African descent in the United States following the Reconstruction Era; and

WHEREAS, lynching was a crime that occurred throughout Virginia, with documented incidents in at least 54 counties, including Culpeper County; and

WHEREAS, lynching denied Virginia citizens, primarily persons of African descent, their Constitutional rights under the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to due process and equal protection under the law; and

WHEREAS, on November 25, 1918, Allie Thompson, an 18-year-old African American man and resident of Culpeper County, was so denied due process and equal protection under the law when he was forcibly removed from jail by a mob and lynched; and

WHEREAS, other men in Culpeper County were denied their rights in similar ways, including William Grayson, who was removed from jail while awaiting an appeal and lynched by a mob in August 1850 and William Thompson, who was removed from jail while awaiting trial and lynched by a mob on August 11, 1877; and

WHEREAS, the commemoration of the deaths of Allie Thompson, William Grayson, and William Thompson provides an opportunity for all Virginians to commit themselves to healing racial divisions in their communities and achieving justice for all; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Culpeper community especially have resolved to take steps to end racially motivated crimes and racist attitudes, advance the cause of reconciliation and understanding, and ensure that these atrocities will neither be forgotten nor repeated; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commemorate the lives and legacies of Allie Thompson, William Grayson, and William Thompson; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the families of Allie Thompson, William Grayson, and William Thompson as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for their memories and appreciation for the significance of these events as a reminder of the need to fight injustice and bigotry in all forms.

ENROLLED

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